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LETTER DATED 8 MAY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The recent news that has reached my Government from Banja Luka in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is very disturbing. The local bishop, Msgr. Franjo Komarica, has informed my Government of a string of serious attacks in the past several days by Serbian paramilitaries aimed at Catholic clerics and the remaining Croats in the region.

On 4 May 1995, Serbian paramilitaries expelled nuns from two historic Catholic convents, at Bosanski Aleksandrovac and Nova Topola. On 5 May a Catholic church in Vujnovići, on the outskirts of Banja Luka, was completely burned down. Finally, on 7 May in the early morning hours, Serbian paramilitary forces rounded up all the friars and nuns from the Franciscan monastery in the Petrićevac suburb of Banja Luka, and in their presence dynamited both the convent and the church. This resulted in the death of one of the Franciscan brothers, Father Alojzije Atlija, OFM, who had been paralysed. The expelled clerics and nuns have now found refuge with the bishop in Banja Luka. The same night saw the destruction of the church at Šargovci, three miles from Banja Luka.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the Diocese of Banja Luka has suffered immensely: a total of 55,000 Catholics have been ethnically cleansed, over 400 have been murdered in their homes, 4 priests have been killed, 37 churches destroyed and 32 more churches damaged - all of this in the region that never saw any military activity and was from the beginning of the conflict firmly under the control of the Bosnian Serbs.

My Government requests that the relevant international monitors be sent to the Banja Luka region to assure that no further harm comes to the non-Serbian population in this nearly completely ethnically cleansed area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and supports the concerns expressed by the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the letter submitted to you today in this regard (S/1995/369).

I would kindly request your assistance in distributing this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Permanent Representative

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